

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 1-A

WASHINGTON TIMES
17 May 1985

Casey details secret Soviet -Cuban strategy

By John Holmes
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Soviet Union and Cuba "have established and are consolidating a beachhead on the American continent" as a launching pad to subvert the rest of Central and Latin America, William Casey, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, will tell the World Business Council in San Antonio, Texas, tomorrow.

At stake, he will tell the organization of chief executive officers of major U.S. corporations, is control of the Panama Canal and, ultimately, the oil fields of the Middle East.

An advance copy of the speech was obtained yesterday by The Washington Times.

Mr. Casey's hard-hitting description of the American stakes in Central America is the most comprehensive argument for U.S. assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance yet put forward by the Reagan administration.

It sets out, in stark and simple terms, the geopolitical stakes in Nicaragua — the administration's view of why Americans should consider its vital interests threatened by a Marxist government in a small nation in Central America.

The threat, the CIA director says, is to the Panama Canal in the short term, to Mexico in "a somewhat longer term," and first consequences of the expansion of Soviet power and influence there will be "a tidal wave" of refugees into the United States.

Nicaragua, he says, is but one element in the Soviet design. Developments there should not be viewed in isolation, he says, but as part of "a worldwide process" that has worked in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

"This campaign of aggressive subversion has nibbled away at friendly governments and our vital interests until today our national security is impaired in our immediate neighborhood as well as in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America," Mr. Casey says.

The two primary targets of "all this carnage, this creeping imperialism" are "the oil fields of the Middle East, which are the lifeline of the Western Alliance, and the isthmus between North and South America," he says.

"Afghanistan, South Yemen, Ethiopia, as well as Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam, and Mozambique and Angola in southern Africa, bring Soviet power astride the sea lanes which carry those resources to America, Europe and

Japan. Capabilities to threaten the Panama Canal in the short term and Mexico in a somewhat longer term are being developed in Nicaragua, where the Sandinista revolution is the first successful Castroite seizure of power on the American mainland," he says.

"They have worked quietly and

steadily toward their objectives of building the power of the state security apparatus, building the strongest armed forces in Central America, and becoming a center for exporting subversion to Nicaragua's neighbors."

This lengthy Soviet campaign has unleashed "the four horses of the Apocalypse — famine, pestilence, war and death." He cites, as evidence, widespread famine in Marxist governments in Africa; pestilence through chemical and biological agents in Afghanistan and Indochina, "war on three continents, and death everywhere."

The unanimous evaluation of "four national estimates" of the U.S. intelligence community lead the United States to believe that "the Soviet Union and Cuba have established and are consolidating a beachhead on the American continent, are putting hundreds of millions of dollars worth of military equipment into it, and have begun to use it as a launching pad to carry their style of aggressive subversion into the rest of Central America and elsewhere in Latin America," Mr. Casey says.

Nicaragua will become to Latin America as Beirut is to the Middle East, he says, a "focal point for international and regional terrorists."

Managua's support for training of Central American subversives is well documented, he says.

"The [Sandinistas] support Salvadoran communists, Guatemalan communists, radical leftists in Costa Rica, and are attempting to increase the number of radical leftist terrorists in Honduras. More recent evidence indicates Nicaraguan support for some South American terrorist groups and growing contacts with other international terrorist groups."

CIA analysts have identified "46 indicators of the consolidation of power by a Marxist-Leninist regime," he says, and since it came

to power in 1979 the Sandinistas have accomplished 33 of these indicators.

The indicators measure the movement toward one-party government; control of the military, security services, media, education, the economy; the forming or takeover of labor unions and other mass organizations; the exertion of population control; the curbing of religious influence, and support for aligning the government with the Soviet Union.

He cites the establishment of a Directorate of State Security to monitor the behavior of the Nicaraguan press, the churches and public institutions. According to CIA estimates, he says, the directorate is staffed by, among others, 400 Cubans, 70 Soviets, 40 to 50 East Germans and 20 to 25 Bulgarians. "There are Soviet advisers at every level of the secret police," he says.

Already, the Sandinistas have developed the best equipped military in the region, with an active strength of 65,000 and almost an equal number of reserves, he says. These forces are equipped with Soviet tanks, armored vehicles, state-of-the-art helicopters, patrol boats and an increasingly comprehensive air defense system that gives the Sandinistas a military capability greater than the other Central American nations combined.

As many as 6,000 to 7,500 Cuban advisers and several hundred other communists and radical personnel are at work in Nicaragua, he says.

With help of Soviet capabilities, contacts and communications channels, the Sandinistas have mounted a worldwide propaganda campaign that shows "remarkable ingenuity and skill in projecting disinformation into the United States itself," he says. "Perhaps the best example of this is the systematic campaign to deceive well-intentioned members of the Western media and of Western religious institutions."

The CIA believes the Sandinistas' "main objectives in regional negotiations are to buy time to further consolidate the regime," Mr. Casey says.

Continued

Beyond that, he argues, the history of agreements forged to end wars in Korea and Indochina are persuasive evidence that agreements with Marxist governments don't mean much.

"We believe that Cuba has assured the Salvadoran Communists that it might take as long as five to 10 years, but as long as the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua remains, that country will serve as a base for Communist expansion in the area and the Salvadoran insurgency will be renewed once the Sandinistas have been able to eliminate the armed resistance."

The major obstacle to Sandinista consolidation — and the establishment of the Marxist base in Central America — is the Nicaraguan resistance, he says. The resistance "encourages the erosion of active support for the Sandinistas by creating uncertainties about the future of the regime; by challenging its claims of political legitimacy, and by giving hope to the leaders of the political opposition."